

THE
D U T Y

Of consulting a

Spiritual Guide

CONSIDER'D:

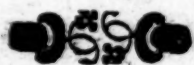
AND THE

P R A C T I C E

Of it recommended to All

CHRISTIANS.

*Ask the Priest concerning the Law, Hag. ii. 11.
Seek the Law at his Mouth, Mal. ii. 7.*



L O N D O N:

Printed for JONAH BOWYER, at the *Rose*
in S. Paul's Church-yard. 1723.

DUTY

CONSIDERED

1606/829.

OF THE

CHARITABLE

HAG II 11
MAY II 7



LONDON

Printed for John Bowyer, at the ...
... of the ...



THE CONTENTS.



INTRODUCTION.

pag. i

CHAP. I.

- Proved to be the Private Christian's
Duty to consult his Spiritual Guide. 2*
- *By way of Consequence from the former
Part. ibid.*
- *From the Names that are given to Mi-
nisters in Holy Scripture. 4*
- *From Christ's appointing and continuing
an Order of Men to attend upon
this very Thing. 5*
- *From the Danger of despising them. 9*
- *From plain Commands of the Holy Scrip-
ture. 13*
- *Of private Confession. 16*

CHAP. II.

OBJECTIONS answer'd.

1. *Taken from Fear of Shame.*
2. *From its being needless.*

24

ibid.

27

3. *From*

THE CONTENTS.

- | | |
|--|----|
| 3. From its being troublesome. | 28 |
| 4. From Publick Preaching. | 29 |
| 5. The Pretence of not wanting it, consider'd. | 31 |
| 6. From the Singularity of it. | 32 |

CHAP. III.

<i>Who is a True Pastor.</i>	40
------------------------------	----

CHAP. IV.

<i>Directions how to apply to him.</i>	50
<i>Prayers, &c.</i>	60



THE



TO THE
INHABITANTS
OF THE
PARISH
OF



S it is my Heart's Desire, and Prayer for you, that ye may be saved; so it is my great Study and Endeavour, as far as in me lies, to promote Your Salvation; and therefore it is, that being sensible how many amongst You do, for the most part, *Absent* themselves from the Worship of God in the Church; how many *Dissent* from it; and that even amongst Those who *continue in its*

DEDICATION.

Doctrine and Fellowship, there are *not a Few* who are ignorant of the *First Principles of the Doctrine of Christ*; and more, who walk not according to it: I have taken this Method of privately Addressing Myself to You, to convince and persuade You to apply Yourselves to Me for private Instruction and Advice.

AND whilst I am endeavouring to persuade You to consult Me as Your Spiritual Guide and Teacher, (who yet am not worthy to be called such) You may depend upon My being glad to receive You, and ready to give You My best Assistance.

I AM entirely satisfy'd, that it is to the great Disuse of this mutual Inter-course betwixt Pastor and People, we, in a great Measure, owe those Clouds of Ignorance, those Mists of Error, which over-shadow Us; that Torrent of Infidelity, Immorality, and Prophaneness which overwhelms Us; and that nothing would tend more to the Propagation of *Christian Knowledge*, and to the Restoration of *Christian Practice*, than the Revival of it.

DEDICATION.

IF therefore, My Brethren, there be any Fear of *perishing for Lack of Knowledge*; any Desire of *Growing in Grace, and in the Knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ*; if You have any *Bowels of Mercy* for Your own Souls; if You would shew Yourself in good Earnest, in an Affair of the greatest Importance, and approve Yourself sincere in Your Search after Truth, in Your Pursuit of Eternal Happiness, be persuaded to give this little Discourse a serious Perusal; and it thro' the Blessing of God may persuade You not altogether to *lean to Your own Strength, nor to trust to Your own Understanding*, in that which is *the one Thing needful*, and of the greatest Difficulty; but to be glad of the Direction of a Guide thro' this troublesom Wilderness in Your Way to the Land of Everlasting Life.

BUT, if *none of these Things move* You; if Ye are resolved to *walk on still in Darkness, in Ignorance and Error*, and will *none of my Counsel, despise all Reproof*; yet at least I shall have this Comfort and Satisfaction, that I have done My Endeavour, that *Ye may all come*
in

DEDICATION.

in the Unity of the Faith, and of the Knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect Man, unto the Measure of the Stature of the Fulness of Christ; and that henceforth Ye be no more Children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every Wind of Doctrine, by the Slight of Men, and cunning Craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive.

MAY God bleſs theſe My Endeavours, and all My Labours, to the Increase of Knowledge and Vertue, Love and Unity; ſo that Peace and Happineſs, Truth and Juſtice, Religion and Piety may be eſtabliſh'd, flouriſh, and abound amongſt You. And God grant, that whiſt I teach, and preach to Others, I Myſelf may not become a Caſt-away. In theſe Prayers You will, I hope, heartily join with Your very affectionate Paſtor and Servant for Jeſus Sake.





THE DUTY

Of Consulting a

Spiritual Guide, &c.



AMONGST the many Expedients of holy Living; there is none more useful and necessary, than that of consulting a Spiritual Guide; and yet none more neglected, there being few even of those who seem to be Religious, who so account of the Ministers of Christ, as to take them for their Guides in their Way to Heaven. It may not therefore be improper to insist upon this Duty, to prove that Christians are obliged to consider their Pastors under this Character; to shew the great Advantage and Usefulness of applying to them; to answer the Objections

that are made against it, to shew who is a true Pastor, and direct them in their Applications to him.



CHAP. I.

Proving it to be a Duty to consult a Spiritual Guide.

I.  F it be the Duty of the Pastor privately to instruct those of his Flock, then it must be equally Their Duty to hearken to, and be directed by his *Private Instructions*; even as, its being his Duty to *preach the Word*, makes it necessary for them to *hear the Word preached, and to keep it*; since Relative Duties do mutually suppose one another; and none can be obliged to teach those, who are not obliged to hearken to their teaching; or to minister to those in any kind, who are not under an Obligation to accept of their Ministration.

Again, since Publick Preaching will not be sufficient to instruct all in the Knowledge and Practice of their Duty, and reach the Case and Necessities of every one in Particular; and

and yet every one in Particular is oblig'd both to Know and to Do those Things which the Gospel hath made necessary to his Salvation; and he can no otherwise come (at least so successfully) to the Knowledge, and go on in the Practice of them, as by consulting his *Spiritual Guide*; this must be necessarily required at his Hands; and whilst he wilfully neglects it, he cannot with any Face plead Ignorance in his Excuse: His Ignorance itself is his Sin, because it is affected and wilful, whilst he slights this easy, certain, and appointed Method of dispelling it.

Does he labour under any *Doubt* or *Scruples*? this, which at first is only his *Misfortune*, afterwards becomes his *Fault*, if he omits applying himself to him, whose Duty and Office it is to assist him in the Removal of it. Is he violently attack'd with any *Temptation*, and knows not how to overcome it? he should beg the Advice and Prayers of those, that under Christ are appointed to advise, and to pray for those that are tempted. Is he actually overcome by the *Temptation*, and overtaken with a *Fault*? he should seek to be restored by him, that is *Spiritual*, i. e. his *Spiritual Guide*. Do *False Teachers* endeavour to seduce him, and to lead him into Error, and out of the Way? except he privately addresses himself to his Faithful Guide, he will not be able to answer their Arguments and Objections; but

will be in Danger of being tossed about with every Wind of Doctrine, and the cunning Craftiness of Men, whereby they lie in wait to deceive him.

Thus it is in a great Measure impossible for a Common Christian to have all his particular Occasions served, his private Wants and Necessities supply'd, by Publick Teaching; and nothing else but private Instructions will answer and relieve them; and therefore it is a Duty which he owes to himself, to seek out for private Instructions.

This also is in the second place evident from the Names and Titles which are given to Ministers. They are Guides of the Blind; a Light of them which are in Darkness; *Instructors of the Foolish, and Teachers of Babes*: But now, how can they be Guides and Lights to others, if others are not obliged to be directed by their Light, and to follow their Guiding? To what Purpose are they appointed *Instructors and Teachers*, if they that are Ignorant, Unlearned, and Foolish, are not obliged to hearken and submit to their Instructions? They are said to be *Stewards of the Mysteries of the Gospel of Christ, Shepherds, Watchmen, and Overseers of Souls*; and is it not the Duty of every one of the Lord's Household, to apply to the Steward to know his Lord's Will, and what he would have him to do? to apply

to

to him for *Meat* in due Season, and for what may be necessary or convenient for him? If they are appointed *Watchmen, Overseers, and Shepherds of Souls*, to take Care of them under Christ, it must be the Duty of those that are under them, to committ their Souls to their Care and Conduct.

3. That this was the very End and Design of Christ, in appointing and continuing an *Order of Men* to attend upon this very Thing, to take Care of Souls, and to build them up in Faith and Obedience; we learn from the express Word of God.

3. From Christ's continuing an Order of Men to attend upon this very Thing.

He gave some Apostles, some Pastors and Teachers, for the Perfecting of the Saints, for the Work of the Ministry, for the Edifying of the Body of Christ, till we all come in the Unity of the Faith, and of the Knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect Man, unto the Measure of the Stature of the Fulness of Christ; that we henceforth be no more Children tossed to and fro, and carried about with every Wind of Doctrine by the Slight of Men, and cunning Craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive (a).

But now Christians cannot be preserved from the Inticements of False Teachers, and their False Doctrine; the Body of Christ cannot be edify'd, Saints cannot be perfected, and

(a) Eph. iv. 11.

brought up unto the Measure of the Stature of the Fulness of Christ, if they do not attend upon those whom Christ hath appointed their Pastors and Teachers; if they committ not themselves to their Care, and follow not their Directions.

And as this was the End of Christ's instituting this Order of Men, for the Edification of his Disciples; so hath he himself promised to assist them in a more especial Manner, in this their Work of the Ministry.

For thus they are said to be *Workers together with Christ* (a). Christ is said to work mightily and effectually in them.

And lest we should confine this Assistance to the Apostles themselves, Christ assures them, *That he would be with them to the End of the World*; which Promise can no otherwise be fulfilled than in their Successors: *The Comforter is promised to abide with them for ever* (b). And therefore S. Paul saith not only of himself, and of the rest of the Apostles, but of all those that plant and water, that they are *Labourers together with God, and that he giveth the Increase of their Labour* (c). And to those whom he had ordained Elders of the Church of Ephesus, he says, *That the Holy Ghost had made them Overseers of the Flock of Christ* (d). And therefore he, without

(a) 2 Cor. vi. 1. (b) Job. xiv. 16. (c) 1 Cor. iii. 7, 9. (d) Acts xx. 28.

doubt, would assist them in the taking Care of them.

And lastly, Christ himself is represented as walking in the midst of the Seven Churches of Asia, and holding the Seven Stars, i. e. the Angels or Bishops of those Churches, the Successors of the Apostles, in his Right Hand (a).

From all which it is plainly evident, that tho' the Apostles, the First Fruits of the Spirit, did receive the Assistance of it in a greater Measure, than any of the succeeding Ministers of Christ; yet that They also have a Title to the Special Assistance, Illumination, and Guidance of him: That tho' they have not the Promise of Infallibility, yet of being furnish'd with all Requisite and Convenient Gifts, according to the Necessities and Capacities of the Times wherein they live, they have the Promise, That he always will accompany their Faithful Endeavours in the Work of the Ministry with Success, and make them effectual to them that sincerely attend upon it.

But now, would Christ have given such an Order of Men, and have dignify'd them with such Titles, if there had been no need of them, and no Regard due unto them? Would he have appointed them to this very Thing, to take Care of Souls, if none were obliged to committ the Care of their Souls unto them?

to be *Spiritual Guides*, if none are required to receive them as such, and to be guided by them? Hath he *promised to be with them*, and to assist them in this great Work? and does not this plainly shew, that this is the best and surest Way of *perfecting Saints*, and that they that would be perfect, must consult these *Living Spiritual Guides*, and be directed by them?

Is not this Provision for the Good of Souls a great Instance of his Care for them, of his Love towards them? and therefore must not they be Despisers of his Goodness, and Enemies to their own Souls, who make little or no Account of it, and seek no Profit by it?

Was there a *Physician* and *Lawyer* authorized and appointed in every Parish, whose Duty and Office it should be, to give their Advice and Opinion *gratis*, to heal the Diseases of the People, and to advise them in all difficult Cases, relating to their Estates; what Application would there be made, and what Regard paid to them? Would the People be contented with hearing a general Lecture upon *Law* and *Physick* read once or twice a Week to them? would they not always apply for private Advice and Instructions, as their particular Occasions might require? Certainly they would; and they would go and do likewise, had they as great a Regard to the Good of their Souls, as they have to the

the Health of their Bodies, and the Securing their Estates.

And yet, which makes the Folly of neglecting this Duty the greater; the Advice of the *Lawyer* and *Physician* may not be asked, or when asked, may not be followed, without Sin; whereas, Christians can neither neglect asking or following the Advice of the *Spiritual Guide*, without Sin and Danger. Which,

4. Is a farther Argument for the Necessity of this Duty; and indeed, a Consequence of what has been deliver'd under the former:

4. From the Danger of despising them.

For to what Purpose would Christ have appointed an Order of Men to be *Spiritual Guides*, if Men were at liberty to neglect and despise their Counsel and Advice?

To suppose that He hath authorized some to take Care of Souls, and yet laid no Obligation upon others to commit the Care of their Souls unto them, is a Reflection upon his Wisdom; and therefore to despise them or their Authority, is, in Effect, a despising of him who gave it. This is what he himself hath expressly assured us of, *He that heareth you, heareth me; and he that despiseth you, despiseth me; and he that despiseth me despiseth him that sent me* (a). He had be-

(a) Luk. x. 16.

fore said to his Apostles, *He that receiveth you, receiveth me; and he that receiveth me, receiveth him that sent me* (a); and threatned those with a worse Punishment, than even that which would be inflicted on *Sodom and Gomorrah* at the Day of Judgment (b). And lest it should be thought that the Apostles only had their Authority thus secured to them, he confirms the same to the *Seventy* also, yea, in general to whomsoever he should send afterwards. *Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that receiveth whomsoever I send, receiveth me; and he that receiveth me, receiveth him that sent me* (c). And therefore *S. Paul* says in general, *He that despiseth, despiseth not Man, but God, who hath also given unto us his Holy Spirit* (d). And since it is the self-same Spirit that makes the succeeding Ministers, *Overseers of the Flock of Christ* (e), it is evident that it is equally dangerous to despise them also.

How greatly therefore are they mistaken, who think that tho' so much Regard and Submission was due to the Apostles, yet little or none at all is due to those who now succeed them in the same Ministry of the Word and Sacraments? "As Christ gave that Authority, which he receiveth from the Father, to his Apostles, and afterwards to those

(a) *Matth. x. 40.* (b) *Ibid. ver. 14, 15.* (c) *Joh. xiii. 20.* (d) *1 Ibeff. iv. 8.* (e) *Acts xx. 28.*

“ that

“ that are still his Ministers, so does he re-
 “ quire all Men to own it, and submitt unto
 “ it; and account the Disowning, the not
 “ Obeying, the Rejecting, and the Despising
 “ them in the Exercise of it, as the Disown-
 “ ing, the Neglecting, and Despising of him
 “ and his Authority; and the Father also
 “ will judge it to be a Rejecting, and Despi-
 “ sing of him, and his Sovereign Power and
 “ Authority, at the last Day.”

Farther, from the Generality of these Ex-
 pressions, it is, I think, plainly evident, that
 equal Regard is to be paid to the *private* and
publick Instructions of the Ministers of Christ,
 that Christians are no more at Liberty to de-
 spise the one than the other, and that all
Things whatsoever agreeable to the Word of God,
which they shall bid them to observe, whether in
Season, or out of Season, in Private, or in Publick,
they are obliged to observe and do. And they
 cannot neglect or despise them, without incur-
 ring the Guilt of contemning Christ's Autho-
 rity, and disobeying his Commands; for cer-
 tainly, as much Regard is due to those that
 sit in *Christ's*, as to those who did sit in
Moses's Chair.

Nor shall we wonder, that Christ is so
 tender of the Authority of his Ministers, so
 severe against those that despise them, if we
 consider how the Authority of the Priests,
 even under the Law, was screened and
 secured, and the severe Punishment that did

did light upon the Head of those that condemned it.

It was a Precept of the Law of *Moses*, That if there arise a Matter too hard for thee in Judgment, thou shalt arise and come unto the Priests, the Levites, and unto the Judge that shall be in those Days; and enquire, and they shall shew thee the Sentence of Judgment; and thou shalt do according to the Sentence, which they of that Place (which the Lord shall choose) shall shew thee; and thou shalt observe to do according to all that they inform thee; and the Man that will do presumptuously, and will not hearken unto the Priests, or unto the Judge, even that Man shall die, and thou shalt put away the Evil from Israel (a).

Here we see with what Authority the Priests under the Law were invested, how they were to be consulted upon particular Occasions; what Regard was to be paid to their Sentence and Judgment, and how severe was the Punishment: Him who would not be determined by it, and do according to it, his Sin was a presumptuous Sin, and Death was the Punishment of it.

And were the *Jews* so much obliged to consult the Priests under the Law, and are *Christians* under no Obligation to advise with the Ministers of Christ, under the Gospel? Was so great a Regard and Deference to be paid to the Sentence of the former, and is there

(a) *Deut.* xvii. 8.

none at all due to the Judgment of the latter? Was it so great a Sin in the *Jews*, not to do as they were informed by the Priest, and is it none at all in the Christian? It is true indeed, the Despisers of the Ministers of Christ, are not, as they that despised the Priests of the Law, to be put to Death without Mercy; but still they have Reason to think, that as their Sin is equally Great, so will their Punishment be in the other World, *since they despise not Men, but God.*

And that they may be said to despise Christ's Ministers, who do not consult them as their Spiritual Guides, and submit to their Instructions, will, in the

5th place, Be still more evident from those plain Commands, requiring them to do so.

That the Children of *Israel* were obliged to this Duty, is evident, not only from the above-cited Text of the Law, but from these following Commands of the Prophets: Thus saith the Lord of Hosts, ask the Priests concerning the Law (a). And again, The Priest's Lips shall keep Knowledge, and they should seek the Law at his Mouth (b). Here, as it is said to be the Duty of Priests to keep Knowledge, or, as it is in another Place expressed, to teach the good Knowledge of God (c); so also is it

5. From the express Commands of the Holy Scripture.

(a) Hag. ii. 11. (b) Mal. ii. 7. (c) 2 Chron. xxx. 22.

commanded the People, *that they should seek the Law at his Mouth, which Words were written for our Admonition*; and Christians should hence learn, if they are *sick*, to send to, if they are *well*, they should come to, *the Elders of the Church, and seek the Gospel at their Mouth*, desire to be fully instructed in all the necessary Truths of it.

But we learn this from the Precepts of the Gospel also; our Blessed Saviour gives it in as the Character of his *Sheep, that they follow the good Shepherd, that they know his Voice, that a Stranger will they not follow, but will flee from him; for they know not the Voice of Strangers. That the good Shepherd knows his Sheep, and also is known of them (a)*. Which Words, tho' they are primarily to be understood of the *Great Shepherd and Bishop of our Souls*, and the Obedience that is due to him, yet since he himself tells us, that they that receive his Ministers, receive him, we may conclude, that they that receive him, receive his Ministers also, *know and follow them*; which Words imply their Attendance and Dependence upon them, and Submission to their Guidance.

Agreeable with which are these Words of S. Paul, *And we beseech you, Brethren, to know them which labour among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you (b)*. And he

(a) *Joh. x. 4, 5, 14.*

(b) *1 Thess. v. 12.*

befeeches the Corinthians, not only to know, but to submit themselves to all such as have addicted themselves to the Ministry of the Saints, and to every one that helpeth with us, and laboureth (a).

But most full to this Purpose is that Command which we have, Obey them that have the Rule over you, and submit yourselves, for they watch for your Souls, as they that must give Account, that they may do it with Joy, and not with Grief, for that is unprofitable for you (b).

The Word ἡγούμεναι is the same with that which is applied to Christ our King himself. Ἐκ οὗ γὰρ ἐξελεύσεται ἡγούμενος οἷς ποιμανεῖ τὸν λαόν μου. — *A Governor which shall rule my People* (c). Which Observation alone sufficiently confutes the Opinion of those, that contend it does not properly signify a *Ruler* or *Governor*, but only a *Guide*; nor is it any where thus translated through the whole New Testament, tho' seven times used in it.

But to let this pass, suppose it doth here signify a *Guide*, it is such a *Guide* as Christians are not at Liberty to obey or disobey, as they shall think fit, like or dislike him; but they are plainly and positively commanded, not only to obey, but to submit themselves.

Πείθεσθε καὶ ὑπακούετε, Words the most expressive of Obedience and Submission; and which plainly prove, that it is the Duty of the private Christian submissively to receive and fol-

(a) 1 Ep. xvi. 15. (b) Hebr. xiii. 17. (c) Matth. ii. 6.

low his Spiritual Directions, to be guided and governed by them, except they are plainly contrary to the Word of God. Yet farther, it is here said, *That they that have the Rule over them, must watch for the Souls of their People, and give an Account of them at the Day of Judgment*; which necessarily supposeth the People's putting their Souls under their Care and Conduct, and acquainting them with the State and Condition of them, and their being directed and guided by them; since without these Things it is impossible for the Pastors of the Flock of Christ to perform that difficult Duty, which is here imposed upon them, to discharge that weighty Trust which is reposed in them: And to induce them to this unpleasant Duty, 'tis here plainly intimated, that except the People will *obey and submit to their Spiritual Teachers and Governors, they cannot give up their Account of them with Joy, but with Grief*; and that Non-submission would be *unprofitable* to those that are guilty of it, *i. e.* it will be highly prejudicial unto them, occasion the Ruin and Loss of their Souls.

Yet still farther, in the last place, let these Words of S. James be seriously
of private consider'd, *Confess your Faults one*
Confession. *to another* (a). Upon which Words Dr. Hammond hath this Note, " That the
 " King's Manuscripts (to which Dr. Milles

(a) S. James v. 16.

“ has added seven more) reads this Place
 “ with some Variation, *Ἐξομολογᾶσθε ἑν, &c.*
 “ *Confess therefore your Sins one to another*, the
 “ *ἑν, therefore*, connecting it to what went be-
 “ fore the Prayer and Absolution of the El-
 “ ders: And indeed, the Elders being the
 “ only Persons, who are sent for, and sup-
 “ posed to be present there, and who, *ex*
 “ *officio*, will be most fit to be compared with
 “ *Elias's* Praying, it must follow, that the
 “ *ἀλλήλοις*, *one to another*, must be restrained
 “ only to the Elders aforementioned, (as,
 “ *All of them be subject to one another (a)*, must
 “ signify, as it is defined by the Matter, Sub-
 “ jection, which is not mutual, nor of Supe-
 “ riors to Inferiors, but only of Inferiors to
 “ Superiors) and the Confessing of Sins to
 “ them, be here prescribed as the Prepara-
 “ tive and Condition of Absolution: To
 “ which Purpose it is certain, that as Re-
 “ pentance, if it be sincere, comprehends
 “ Confession to God; and if the Penitent
 “ desire to approve the Sincerity of it to the
 “ Spiritual Person, and obtain Absolution
 “ from him, it is necessary that he makes at
 “ least a General Confession, and such as shall
 “ not hide any Sort of his Guilt from him,
 “ (as we read at *John's* Baptism (b), where
 “ the *Greek* Fathers and Scholiasts agree, *ὅτι*
 “ *πάντα πρὸς ὅν λέγειν τὰς ἑαυτοῦ ἀμαρτίας*, &c.

(a) 1 Pet. v. 5.

(b) *Matth.* iii. 6.

“ Every faithful Man ought to tell his Of-
 “ fences, and to renounce and disclaim them)
 “ and ’tis very useful and expedient, that he
 “ descend to Particulars, that his Prayers
 “ may be more particularly adapted to his
 “ Wants, and probably prove more Efficacious
 “ by these Means; so this particular
 “ Confession will be very advantageous to
 “ the Penitent, for the obtaining Direction
 “ to the most proper Remedies, for the re-
 “ sisting and preventing the Returns of those
 “ Sins, in order to his fortifying himself a-
 “ gainst them.”

But supposing this Interpretation of this
 judicious Great Man, was not most agreeable
 to the Mind of the Apostle, yet here is a plain
 Command to confess our Sins not only unto
 God, but to Man also; and if it be our Duty
 to confess our Faults to our Brethren, that
 they may pray for the Pardon of them, it
 will not surely be deny’d, that it is at least
 equally needful and convenient, to confess our
 Faults to those Spiritual Guides, whose Duty
 and Office it is *to restore them that are overtaken
 with them (a); to pray for them; to whom is
 given the Ministry of Reconciliation (b); and
 to whom Christ having said, Whose soever Sins
 ye remitt, they are remitted; and whose soever Sins
 ye retain, they are retained; hath given them
 Power and Authority, to declare and pronounce*

(a) Gal. vi. 1.

(b) 2 Cor. v. 18.

to his People, being Penitent, the Absolution and Remission of their Sins.

And to the Practice of this, Christians are still more encouraged, not only by the Example of those, that were baptized by John, confessing their Sins (a); but of those that believing, confessed and shewed their Deeds unto Paul (b).

The Church of Rome doth indeed ground the Necessity of *Auricular Confession* upon these Texts of Scripture, and accordingly determines, That it is necessary for every Christian to confess all his secret Sins, with their Aggravations, unto a Priest, under Pain of forfeiting the Forgiveness of them (c).

The Church of *England* hath not so determined, yet hath she no where expressly condemned this Doctrine: She doth not command her Members to confess all their Sins unto a Priest, under the Penalty of Damnation, yet she recommends Confession, as in some Cases necessary, and in others as highly expedient and useful.

In Conformity with the Practice of the Primitive Church (d), she requires those of her Members, that have been open and no-

(a) *Matth.* iii. 6.

(b) *Acts* xix. 8.

(c) *Concil. Trid. Sess. 14. Can. 7. Cat. ad Par. sub Confess.*

(d) *Vid. Johnson's Unbl. Sacr. Part II. p. 235. Penitential Discipline of the Primitive Church, p. 44.*

torious Offenders, to make open Confession
 to the Priest before the Congregation: For
 thus the Orders in the Rubrick before the
 Communion, *So many as intend to be Partakers
 of the Holy Communion, shall signify their Names
 to the Curate, at least some Time the Day before ;*
 which is required to be done not only the
 first, but every time they Communicate ; and
 was this Rubrick observed, there would not
 be so many Unworthy Communicants. And if
 any of those, that signify'd their Names, be an
 open and notorious evil Liver, the Curate having
 Knowledge thereof, shall call him, and advertise
 him, that in any wise he presume not to come to
 the Lord's Table, until he have openly declared
 himself to have truly repented, and amended his
 former Life, that the Congregation may thereby be
 satisfied, which before was offended. And with
 respect to more private and secret Sins, the
 Curate is to exhort his People, saying, *That
 if any of them cannot quiet his Conscience, but
 requireth farther Comfort or Counsel, let him
 come to me, or to some other discreet and learned
 Minister of God's Word, and open his Grief,*
*that by the Ministry of God's Holy Word, he
 may receive the Benefit of Absolution, together
 with Ghostly Counsel and Advice, to the quieting
 of his Conscience, and avoiding of all Scruple and
 Doubtfulness.* And still more plainly in the
 Office of the Visitation of the Sick, the Mi-
 nister is enjoined, *not only in general, to exa-
 mine, whether the sick Person truly repent him of*
his

his Sins; but he is farther to move him to make a Special Confession of his Sins, if he feels his Conscience troubled with any weighty Matter: After which Confession of his Sins, the Priest shall absolve him, if he humbly and heartily desire it.

From whence it seems plain, That the Church here insists so much upon Confession, that without it she would not have Absolution given, since it is said, *After which Confession the Priest shall absolve.* He is not obliged; or rather, he is not at Liberty, to absolve him, before it is made.

Agreeable with this Doctrine of our Church, we find not only the Judgment of Dr. Hammond, in the above-cited Annotation; but the Author of *The Whole Duty of Man*, and Bishop Taylor (a) earnestly recommend this Duty, give many Arguments for it, and answer all the Objections against it. And amongst the Primitive Fathers, *Clemens Alex.* particularly insists upon

it, saying, * "Wherefore it
 "highly behoveth him who is
 "Rich and Mighty, and whom
 "Power and Riches have puffed
 "up, to set a *Man of God* over
 "himself, who may be an Assistant and Go-
 "vernour unto him. Have one, at least,
 "whom thou may'st regard, and whom

* Δὶδ δὲ
 πάντας τοὺς
 σοφιστὰς, &c.
 Clem. Alex.
 Quisnam Di-
 ves, c. 41.

(a) *Holy Living and Dying*, p. 192. Vid. Stearne de
 Visitat. Infirmorum.

" thou

* thou may'st stand in awe of: Be diligent to
 " hear him speak freely unto thee, some-
 " times rebuking thee sharply, and sometimes
 " using Mildness towards thee; for it is not
 " profitable for thee always to be at ease, al-
 " ways to have dry Eyes; but to weep some-
 " times, and to endure Hardship for thy
 " Health sake; so nothing is more pern-
 " cious unto the one, than a continued Scene
 " of Pleasure; it is blinded by Softness and
 " Indulgence, but is made better and more
 " constant by Plain-Dealing. Be afraid of
 " thy Guide when he is angry; and be con-
 " cerned when he grieves for thee: Pay a
 " strict Regard to his milder Reproofs, and
 " prevent his deprecating Judgment falling
 " upon thee: He will be in Watchings often,
 " pouring out Prayers unto God for thee,
 " and pacifying the Father by his repeated
 " Supplications. — He will offer up pure
 " Hands for thee; being regarded by thee
 " as the Angel of God; in nothing made
 " sorry by thee, only careful for thee." This
 is true Repentance.

And, indeed, had we not these Examples,
 and this Authority in the Holy Scriptures,
 for this Duty; and agreeable hereto, the
 Practice of the Primitive Church, and the
 Injunctions of our own; yet since the Mi-
 nisters of Christ are Spiritual Guides, and
 Physicians of Souls; since they cannot well
 administer unto them, if they know not
 their

their State and Condition; if they will not confess their Faults unto them; the Expediency, if not Necessity of doing so, does from hence evidently appear according to the Observation of *S. Jerome*, “ If he that is wounded with Sin, will not lay open his Wound to the Physician of his Soul, he cannot so effectually administer to his Necessity, nor so well assist him in the Curing of it; and therefore the Duty which he owes to himself, obligeth him to confess his Sins, and declare his Case to his Spiritual Guide and Physician” (a).

(a) Si tacuerit qui percussus est, & nec egerit Pœnitentiam; nec Vulnus suum Fratri & Magistro voluerit confiteri, Magister, qui linguam habet ad Curandum, facile ei prodesse non poterit; si enim erubescat ægrotus Vulnus medico confiteri quod ignorat, medicina non curat. *S. Hier. cap. 10. Eccles.*





CHAP. II.

OBJECTIONS answer'd.

I.



SINCE then God hath appointed an Order of Men to be *Spiritual Guides*, how comes it to pass, that they are so seldom received and consulted as such, and that there is so little Desire of, so little Regard paid to, their Admonitions and Guidance? Is it, O Man, because thou art ashamed to confess thy Ignorance, and to lay open thy Case unto thy Spiritual Pastor?

1. Taken from Fear of Shame.

But why shouldst thou be more ashamed to confess thy Ignorance in *Spiritual*, than in *Temporal Matters*; or, is the Ignorance of the former more excusable, and of less dangerous Consequence, than of the latter? Thou may'st safely, without gaining any great Shame, Harm, or Loss unto thyself, be unacquainted with, and unskilful in, many Things pertaining to this Life; whereas, if thou art unwise, and not understanding what the Will of the Lord is, thou wilt perish everlastingly for lack of Knowledge: And therefore it is, that the Wise Man so often inculcates these Proverbs,

verbs, *Fools despise Wisdom and Instruction. Hear Instruction, and be wise. Whoso loveth Instruction, loveth Knowledge ; but he that hateth Reproof, is brutish. Poverty and Shame shall be to him that refuseth Instruction. He that refuseth Instruction, despiseth his own Soul (a).*

It may be, thou art ashamed to acknowledge thy Faults, or to lay open thy Case unto thy Spiritual Pastor, or afraid that this will expose thee too much to him, and lessen his Opinion of thee: But art thou ashamed to discover the most secret and shameful Diseases of thy Body, when thou askest the Advice of thy Physician concerning the Cure of them? Does *any one sue thee at the Law*, and endeavour to take away thy Right? dost not thou presently lay open thy whole Case to some skilful Lawyer? or, dost thou keep back any Thing from him, that may in the least concern thee, or be of Use to him to know? Why then art not thou equally open and free in discovering the hidden Vices and Corruptions of thy Soul to him, whom thou consultest concerning the Salvation of it? Or, how canst thou expect *Ghostly Advice and Counsel* from him, such as may tend to thy Soul's Health, if thou neglectest to lay open thy true State and Condition to him? *What shall I do to be saved?* is a Question

(a) *Prov. i. 7. viii. 33. xii. 1. xiii. 18. and xv. 32.*

of infinitely more moment to thee, than any Thing that concerns thy Body or Estate; how then canst thou be at Ease, till thou art able fully to answer it? And he whom thou consultest, instead of having the worse, will have the better Opinion of thee, when he seeth thee in good Earnest desirous of Salvation, and with Devout *Cornelius*, ready to *hear all Things that are commanded thee of God.*

The more open and ingenuous thou art with him, the more will he esteem thy Sincerity; and if in manifesting thyself unto him, there appear some Faults and Sins which thou hast been guilty of, yet do not these lessen his good Opinion of thee, but rather increase it; since the more open and free thou art in the Confession of thy Sins, that thou may'st receive *Advice* concerning them, the more thou convincest him of thy true Repentance; and he looks upon thee now no longer as a *Sinner*, but as an *Innocent Person*, being satisfy'd, that thou art a *True Penitent*; and if thou followest his Advice, and keepest thy Resolutions of Amendment, he will have more Joy from thee, than from those that need no Repentance; for as there is Joy in Heaven, so also amongst all good Men on Earth, at one *Sinner that repenteth.*

But still thou art afraid, that he will discover thy Faults or Failings unto others, and it may be thou hast been guilty of some Crimes,

Crimes, which it may not be safe or prudent, to make known to any Person in the World: *In such a Case*, tho' it is not to be supposed, that he who is willing to take upon him the Care of thy Soul, *should ever be a Revealer of thy Secrets*, and betray the Trust and Confidence reposed in him; yet may'st thou, without discovering thyself, ask Advice, as it were, for a third Person; what such an one, that had been guilty of such a Crime, or Crimes, should be advised to do, in order to approve the Sincerity of his Repentance, and to obtain the Pardon of his Sins?

2. But still thou may'st urge farther, Why should I confess my Sins unto Man? is it not sufficient to confess them unto God?

2. *From its being needless.*

Now, what has been already offered, does prevent this Objection: However, let it be consider'd farther, That tho' it may not be necessary, in order to obtain the Forgiveness of Sins, yet joined with the other Acts of Repentance, it may make it more Efficacious, for the obtaining of it. " As it is
 " the best Test that any can give of his Hu-
 " mility, Sincerity, and Conversion, when
 " he thus judges and condemns himself, and
 " gives Glory to God, as 'tis particularly so
 " call'd in the Case of *Achan*; by confessing
 " thy Sins in this Manner, thou effectually
 " killest the Root of Pride, and acknow-
 " ledgest the Justice of God in punishing

“ thee; and by such an Act of judging thy-
 “ self here, thou preventest the more angry
 “ Judgment of God hereafter (a).” *For if*
we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged
of the Lord (b).

It is necessary also, in order to the better understanding of the Nature of the Sins thou may’st have been guilty of, and the Degrees of that Repentance that may be requisite in order to obtain the Forgiveness of them; that the *Righteous Man* may the better suit his Prayers to thy Condition, and more effectually send them up to Heaven for thy Pardon; that he may also the better adapt his *Counsel and Advice* to it, and thou may’st receive more proper and useful Directions how to *overcome* thy Sin, and to be *restored* from it, for the Time to come: And it will not a little serve to this good End and Purpose, when thou seest that the Repetition of it will expose thee to more Shame and Trouble, as the Confession of it contradicts the *Pride and Naughtiness of thy Heart*.

3. But this, perhaps, may be a still farther
 Objection against the Practice
 of this Advice, That it may ex-
 pose thee not only to Shame,
 but to too much Pain and Trou-
 ble; that *the Man of God* may deal too

3. *From its*
being trouble-
some.

(a) *Clergyman's Companion in Visiting the Sick*, p 13.

(b) 1 Cor. xi. 31.

severely with thee, and impose too much upon thee.

And does he that has a mortal, or a dangerous Wound given him, forbear sending for, or going to, a skilful Surgeon, for fear he should cut or scarify him too much, or put him to too much Pain and Torment? Does he not rather suffer, yea, desire him to search to the Bottom of the Wound, and to apply the most proper, tho' they may be the most corroding and painful Medicines?

Even so, if thou hast *a Spirit wounded with Sin*, and art in good Earnest desirous of being cured of it, thou wilt refuse no present Pain and Trouble, that may be requisite and convenient, in order to procure thy Ease and Quiet.

4. But still, What Occasion of consulting a Spiritual Guide in Private, when there is so much Publick Preaching, and so many good and useful Books written for the Direction and Assistance of Private Christians?

4. *From Publick Preaching.*

That Publick Preaching will not reach the Case, and serve the Necessities of all private Christians, has already been observ'd; the Observation is equally true of *the Books that have been written*, tho' they are of great Use and Benefit to the serious Reader; and many there are, *that are often Reading, and yet never come to the Knowledge of the Truth*; they meet not with that which is proper for their

own Case; or, if they do, yet know not how to apply it: *They that are unlearned and unstable, do, too often, wrest the Scriptures to their own Destruction, instead of learning from them the Way of Salvation; and all other Writings are to them dead Letters. They understand not what they read; and how can they, except some Man should guide them (a)? A living Guide is much better than dead Letters; and since God hath been pleased to appoint such, that they may instruct and lead his People in the Way to Happiness, it is certainly the most prudent, and the safest Method, for the private Christian to apply to, and rely upon, this instituted Means of Instruction; and there is much more Ground and Reason to expect the Divine Blessing upon it, than upon any other Way or Means of our own Devising. Since God hath appointed, That the Priest's Lips should keep Knowledge, and that the People should seek the Law at his Mouth; this, without doubt, is the likeliest Method of finding it. Who would content himself with reading Books of Law or Physick, without consulting with those that are skilled in those Sciences? Or, if he should, and trust to his own Judgment, his Reading may only serve to increase his Distemper, and to run him into the greater Difficulties? And is Divinity the only Science that admitts of no Difficulties?*

(a) *Acts viii. 30, 31.*

May Men here more safely lean to their own Understandings, and think themselves wiser than their Teachers? They that do so, will be in great Danger of being tossed about with every Wind of Doctrine; of wandering out of the Way, and at last will fall into the Ditch. It is true, indeed, all those Things which are necessary to Salvation are easily known; yet not so easy, as not sometimes to want the Instruction and Guidance of those that are Spiritual, to teach them more perfectly.

5. And let they that want them, sayest thou still, crave their Advice and Direction: Let the Ignorant and ^{5. From not wanting it.} Unlearned apply for Knowledge in the Will of God; as for me, *I am already thoroughly furnished with it*: Let the doubting Christian seek to have his Doubts resolved, *I am strong in Faith, nothing doubting*: Let the profligate Sinner ask for Medicine to heal the Sores of his wounded Conscience, *I have none that trouble and disquiet mine*: Let the slothful Christian see to have the Lets and Hindrances in his Way to Heaven removed, *I thank God, I have none to remove*; *I am not as other Men are, but run with Cheerfulness the Way of God's Commandments*: *And they that are whole, have no need of a Physician, but they that are sick.*

'Tis true, indeed, if this be thy Case, thou hast no need of one; but take heed thou dost not deceive thyself; that thou sayest not, *I am rich and increased with Goods, and have*

have need of nothing, and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked (a). For the Heart is deceitful above all Things, and desperately wicked, who can know it? So that, as the Author of *The Whole Duty of Man* judiciously observes, “ God knows, it is not only doubting Persons, to whom this Advice may be useful (of consulting a Spiritual Guide) there are others of another Sort, whose Confidence is their Disease, who presume very groundlessly of the Goodness of their Estates; and for those, it were most happy if they could be brought to hear some more equal Judgment than their own, in this so weighty a Business. The Truth is, we are generally so apt to favour ourselves, that it might be very useful for most, sometimes to advise with a Spiritual Guide, to enable them to pass a right Judgment on themselves; and not only so, but to receive Instructions how to subdue and mortify those Sins they are most inclined to, which is a Matter of so much Difficulty, that we have no Reason to despise any Means that may help us in it”.

6. *From the Singularity of it.*

6 But after all, it may be, thou wilt meet with some that will ask thee, What Necessity is there for all this? Why may it not be enough for thy Salvation, which is enough for

(a) Rev. iii. 17.

the Salvation of most Men, who live and die, and go to Heaven without all this Trouble; contenting themselves to have a Minister in their Parish, to hear him preach, and to receive the Sacrament from his Hands, without putting themselves, or him, to so much Trouble concerning their Souls; if they may be saved without so much ado, why mayest not thou? It is not good to be singular, and they that teach Men to be so, are not their Friends.

This Objection, as it is proposed, so I shall beg Leave to answer it, in the Words of *The Country Parson's Advice to his Parishioners*, because it is a Book, tho' in few Hands, yet deserves to be in all.

“ To those Men many Things may be re-
 “ plied; but it may suffice to offer these few
 “ Things to their Consideration. We do
 “ not take upon us to judge of the Everlasting
 “ State of any, we leave *That to be manifested*
 “ *in that Day, which shall bring to Light the*
 “ *most hidden Things.* We do not bind Men
 “ to take this Course, upon Pain of Ever-
 “ lasting Damnation; but surely every Man
 “ is concerned to endeavour to save his own
 “ Soul; and whether the best Way to do
 “ this, be to do as the most do, or to do as I
 “ have advised thee, do thou judge. Look
 “ into the World, and observe the daily
 “ Miscarriages of those Men, whose Practice
 “ thou art urged to approve and imitate
 “ How

How many of them, after many Years
 going to Church, and hearing of Sermons,
 have no more Understanding in the very
 Principles of their Religion, than they
 had when they were Children; and of
 whom we may say, as S. Paul did of some,
*That they are ever Learning, but never able
 to come to the Knowledge of the Truth.* How
 many are there puffed up with a great O-
 pinion of their own Knowledge, and know
nothing as they ought to know; and will never
 know any Thing, because those that should
 and would instruct them, cannot know
 their Ignorance, till it is too late to give
 them Instructions. How many of them
 become a Prey to Seducers, and drink in
damnable Doctrines with as much Eager-
 ness, as they should do the most Saving
 Truths, meerly because they take upon
 them to judge of every Thing, and will
 not take Advice of those, whom God hath
 set over them, to direct them? How many
 go groaning under the Burden of troubled
 Consciences for many Years, and it may
 be, after all, become desperate, and lay
 violent Hands upon themselves, because
 they would not discover their Grief to a
 Spiritual Physician, *who might have poured
 in Wine and Oil into their Wounds, and have
 bound them up to their Everlasting Peace and
 Comfort?* How many are there, that go on
 in those Things, which if they knew to
 “ be

“ be sinful, they would leave and forsake;
 “ that call *Evil Good, and Good Evil*; that
 “ say, *Peace to themselves, when there is no*
 “ *Peace*; which dangerous Mistake would be
 “ rectify’d by a *Faithful Guide*? How many
 “ go on in an evil Course, who might be
 “ persuaded to leave it; but for some Preju-
 “ dices which they have entertain’d, either
 “ against a good Life in general, or some
 “ particular Duties, or against some Doctrine,
 “ which, if received, would work a Refor-
 “ mation in them: Which Prejudices Christ’s
 “ Ministers cannot remove, because they
 “ know them not? How many, in a word,
 “ that mean well, and make many good
 “ Promises and Resolutions, are overcome
 “ by their Lusts, and the Temptations of
 “ the Devil and the World, meerly for want
 “ of Directions; particularly as to those Lusts
 “ and Temptations? These sad Shipwrecks,
 “ and many more, which thou mayest daily
 “ behold, may convince thee how dange-
 “ rous it is to go in the Common Way, and
 “ how much safer it will be to follow the
 “ Advice which I have given thee: And if
 “ Men will not be persuaded that it is their
 “ Duty to do thus, I am sure they may see
 “ it is so much their Interest, that they can-
 “ not despise it, without despising their own
 “ Souls. And as for the Imputation of Sin-
 “ gularity, which thou mayest be threatned
 “ with, it is but what the best of Christ’s
 “ Disciples

“ Disciples have undergone in all Ages, and
 “ no good Christian will make any Reckoning
 “ of it. Were we to please Men, we should
 “ have Reason to dread it; but since our
 “ Business is to please God, and to save our
 “ Souls, it is no matter what they either
 “ say or think of us. Suppose, my Brother,
 “ that Christ had shewed himself as much
 “ concerned for the Health of our Bodies,
 “ or the Increase of our Estates, as he hath
 “ done for the Salvation of our Souls; that
 “ he had appointed an Order of Men to
 “ teach us how to get Money, or preserve
 “ ourselves in Health or Strength for many
 “ Years, and had given them as strict a
 “ Charge to take Care of it, and be diligent
 “ in it; and had promised them as great
 “ Assistances to make their Cares and En-
 “ deavours effectual to these Ends, as he hath
 “ done to the appointed Guides of Souls;
 “ and that he had commanded all Men as
 “ strictly to respect them as his Officers ap-
 “ pointed to these Purposes; to follow their
 “ Directions, and submit themselves in all
 “ Things to them, as he has commanded
 “ Men to submit to their Spiritual Guides:
 “ Supposing this, I say, dost thou think that
 “ Men would behave themselves in that
 “ Manner towards these good Friends of the
 “ Body, as they do to the great Friends and
 “ Guides of their Souls? Would they con-
 “ tent themselves to hear them read once or
 “ twice

twice a Week a Publick Lecture of Physick
or good Husbandry? No, no, we should
see every Man running to their Houses
and desiring private Conversation with
them; we should hear one saying, Sir,
you take great Pains among us, and read
very well and learnedly; but I am a poor
ignorant Man, and understand but little,
and remember less, and therefore I pray
you explain and repeat some of these good
Things to me which you speak in Publick.
And another we should hear complaining,
that he could receive no Benefit by all his
Pains, because his Discourses were not
proper for his Case, and therefore be-
seeching him to consider his particular Ne-
cessities, and to give him Directions suita-
ble thereunto, &c. This we may well
suppose Men would do, from what we see
them do now, when they need the Advice
of Physicians, and of the Men of Skill in
worldly Matters; and we may boldly say,
that they would not spare (keeping still
to the former Supposition) to make loud
Outcries against the appointed Physicians,
as being false to their Trust, in case they
should refuse to hear them in private, and
referr them to their publick Lectures.
Now, let any Man tell me, why Men do
not take the same Course for their Souls,
which they would take for their Bodies
and Estates. Will they say, that their

E

4. Souls

Souls have not so much need of the Help
 of Christ's Ministers, as their Bodies have
 of the Help of Physicians; and that they
 know better how to secure their Spiritual
 and Eternal Welfare, than they do their
 Temporal? This would betray more stu-
 pid Ignorance, or devilish Pride and Self-
 Conceit, than they are willing to discover.
 Will they say, That the Ministers may un-
 derstand the particular Necessities of every
 Person, and provide for them, without
 taking the Course prescribed; and that
 they may suit their publick Instructions,
 Exhortations, and Directions, to all Mens
 Capacities, how different soever they are?
 This will be to make them more than Pro-
 phets, to ascribe a kind of Omniscience to
 them; yea, and an Omnipotence too; to
 make their Sermons, as God is said, by
 some, to have made the *Manna* in the
 Wilderness, agreeable to the Taste of e-
 very one; which I suppose no Man in his
 Wits will do. What then is the Reason
 of it? For my part, I can give no other
 than this, That either they are grossly ig-
 norant, and little better than Beasts in Un-
 derstanding; or meer Infidels, under the
 Name of Christians; or if they do in some
 sort believe the Gospel, yet their Hearts
 are so far engaged to the World, that they
 cannot have any serious and constant Re-
 gard to their Immortal Souls.

“ But

“ But to put an End to this Matter, I
 “ the Cause of the Common Practice be good
 “ or bad, I am sure the Effects of it are sad
 “ and lamentable; the great Decay of Chri-
 “ tian Piety among us, the great Increase of
 “ all Manner of Wickedness, the Multiply-
 “ ing of Errors, Schisms, and Divisions, hat-
 “ no one more visible Cause than this; and
 “ till Men be convinced, that they owe a
 “ greater Respect to their Spiritual Guides
 “ than their Practice carries in it, and will
 “ be persuaded to follow the Advice I have
 “ now given them, I cannot hope to see any
 “ Stop put to these Evils: I beseech thee
 “ therefore, my Brother, by all that is dear
 “ to thee, not to despise my Counsel. De-
 “ ferr not to make choice of a Guide; and
 “ when thou hast done, be not slack to *desire*
 “ his Advice, nor backward to follow it;
 “ thou mayst be confident of the Blessing of
 “ God in so doing; thy Guide is particularly
 “ concerned to give thee the best Advice he
 “ can, and God is concerned to make it ef-
 “ fectual for this Good, since he hath par-
 “ ticularly ordained it for that End.





CHAP. III.

Shewing who is a True Pastor.

AND now, at last, I hope I may suppose thee fully convinced of the great Necessity and Advantage of making Use of a *Spiritual Guide*, and that thou art in good Earnest resolved to consult him, and to commit the Care of thy Soul unto him. But then thou mayst justly ask, *Who? Where is he?* Since there are so many false Teachers gone out into the World, how shall I know which is a true one? Among so many different Pretenders to the Ministry, how shall I find out, which are indeed the Ministers of Christ? Are all Apostles? Are all Prophets? Are all Teachers (a)? S. Paul plainly determines, that they are not so; as also, Christ himself saith to the Angel of the Church of Ephesus, *Thou hast tried them, which say they are Apostles, and are not, and hast found them Lyars* (b). And if in the Days of S. John the Apostle, there were false Deceivers, who said, that they

(a) 1 Cor. xii. 29.

(b) Rev. ii. 2.

were Ministers of Christ, and were not, much more are there such in our Days; How then shall I be able to know and find them out?

This indeed is a Question of grand Importance; for Christ, who hath appointed an Order of Men to teach his People, hath forbidden them to heap to themselves Teachers warned us against those that come in Sheep Cloathing, and yet are ravenous Wolves; and assures us, That if the Blind lead the Blind they shall both fall into the Ditch. It is to them only that derive their Authority from him, through the Hands of the Apostles, and their Successors; and are his commissioned Ministers, that he hath promised his Presence and Assistance to the End of the World. So that if he confirms the Acts, and blesses the Ministry of any others, it is more than he hath promised in his Holy Word.

Nor is the Question of so great Difficulty, but that every one might of himself judge what is Right; if without Partiality, and without Hypocrisy, he would consider the following Particulars, and the Texts of Scripture annexed to them.

That none ought to act as Ministers of Christ in his Church, but they that have received a Commission from him. (a).

That none can be said to receive a Divine Commission from him, but they who are either

(a) Matth. xxviii. 18, 19, 20.

mediately or immediately called and appointed by him: See the Texts cited under the Letter (a).

That they that pretend to an immediate Call, ought, as the Apostles did, to prove the Truth of their Mission, *by working of Miracles*; till which Time no Regard is due to their Pretences (b).

That therefore the only standing regular Way of *having this Honour*, is the deriving of it mediately thro' the Hands of others, from Christ himself.

That Christ himself, whilst on Earth, had two Orders of Men under him, the twelve Apostles, and the Seventy; gave the Power of sending, or ordaining others, to the Apostles; and to them only, and those that succeed them, *did he give the Promise of his Presence and Assistance unto the End of the World* (c).

That after Christ's Ascension into Heaven, there were still *Three distinct Orders* set apart to the Ministry, *viz. Deacons, Presbyters, or Elders*; and a still *Higher Order*, which were superior too, and had Authority over both these, such were, besides the *Apostles, Timothy,*

(a) Rom. x. 15. Hebr. v. 4, 5. Acts xiv. 23. Rev. ii. 2. (b) Mark xvi. 20. Matth. vii. 15. and ix. 6, 30, 31. 1 Job. iv. 1. (c) Luk. ix. 1. vi. 13. x. 1. and xxii. 29, 30. Job. xx. 21. Matth. xxviii. 16, 20.

Titus, S. James, surnamed the Just, and the Angels of the Seven Churches (a).

That therefore in the Beginning of the Christian Church there was not a *Parity*, but *Inequality*, or *Prelacy* in the Ministers of it.

That farther from the Holy Scriptures it is evident, That the Power of Ordination was lodged in those of the Highest Order, *Timothy* and *Titus*, and in them alone without any others being mentioned with them (*b*).

That we have no Warrant from *Scripture* to conclude, that this Power was given by the Apostles to those of the second Order, now called Presbyters; the chief Text upon which this Warrant is supposed to be grounded, being that of the Apostle to *Timothy*, *Neglect not the Gift that is in thee, which was given thee by Prophecy, with the Laying on of the Hands of the Presbytery (c).* And as Mr. Roberts judiciously observes, “ To make this Place
“ any thing to the Purpose, these Three
“ Things at least must be proved. 1. That
“ by Presbytery, is here meant a Company of
“ Persons. 2. That these Persons were all
“ meer Presbyters. 3. That none but such
“ gave *Timothy* his Ordination. The first of
“ which is uncertain; the second improba-
“ ble; and the third absolutely false” (*d*).

(a) *Acts* xii. 17. xv. 13. and xxi. 18. *Gal.* ii. 9. 1 *Tim.* v. 19, 22. *Tit.* i. 5. *Rev.* ii. 2. (b) 1 *Tim.* v. 22. *Tit.* i. 5. (c) 1 *Tim.* iv. 14. (d) Visitation Sermon at Okehampton.

That since it does not appear, *that the Commission to Ordain*, which the Apostles received from our Blessed Saviour, was ever granted by them to those that are now called *Presbyters*, they cannot justly lay Claim to the *Power of Ordination*: Every Commission necessarily supposing a Conveyance, and being exclusive of all Persons, except those to whom it is given.

That they who had *the Power of Ordination* lodged in their Hands by the Apostles, had many *Presbyters*, and many Congregations under their Jurisdiction, as may be seen by these Texts of Scripture (a).

So far we may conclude from the Holy Scriptures themselves; and from Primitive Antiquity it is farther evident,

That immediately after the Death of *S. John*, these three Orders, *Bishops*, *Presbyters*, and *Deacons*, were established in every Church; and the Power of *Bishops* over *Presbyters* universally owned and acknowledged (b).

That down from the Beginning of Christianity, until the Time of the Reformation, the Power of conferring Orders was supposed to be lodged, not in the Hands of *Presbyters*, but of *Bishops*; nor can so much as one Instance be produced of *Presbyters* laying Claim to this

(a) *Tit.* i. 5. *1 Tim.* i. 3. and v. 19, 22. *Acts* xix. 10. and xx. 17. compared with *Rev.* ii. 1, 2.

(b) *Vid.* *Ignatius's Epist.*

Power, and of its being allowed by the Church of Christ: For the Truth of this Proposition, we have the same Evidence that we have for the Canonicalness of several Books of the New Testament, the Concurrent Testimony of the Church of Christ.

That at the Time of the Reformation, this Power of our Church still continued in, and was appropriated to those of the Highest Order.

That those *Presbyters* who first broke off from the Communion with their *Bishops*, and first pretended to this *Authority of Ordaining others*, did not receive it; only a Power to preach the Word, and administer the Sacraments, according to the Rules of the Gospel, and the Canons of the Church, and this in Subordination to their *Bishops*; much less did they receive Authority to ordain others, in Opposition to them to whom they owed, and had sworn Obedience.

That therefore *since none can give that which he did not receive*, they amongst us, who have received their Orders only from the Hands of *Presbyters*, have no valid Ordination, no Authority to act in Christ's Name, as his commissioned Ministers, and to be Spiritual Guides of the People.

I shall only add farther under this Head, That tho' it was only a doubtful Case, *Whether Presbyterian Ordination was valid, or not*; yet, since it is confessed on all hands, that they

they of the National Church that are Episcopally Ordained are Lawful Ministers of Christ, it is the Christian's Duty and Interest to obey and submit to them, and to acknowledge them only as their *Guides that watch for their Souls*; since in all doubtful Cases the safest Side is to be chosen.

That *lastly*, Tho' Presbyters had undoubtedly a Power to ordain, yet would not this make them the Lawful Pastors of this Church and Nation, except they can prove that either Bishops have no Power to ordain, (which is not so much as pretended) or that they impose sinful Terms of Communion upon their People, (which was never proved by any, and is not believed by many of those that dissent from them) for nothing is more evident, than that it is unlawful to *Separate*, where it is lawful to *Communicate*; that they *cause Divisions, who divide without a Cause (a)*; and that they divide without a Cause, who have no sinful Terms of Communion imposed upon them.

The Bishops and their Clergy therefore having had long Possession of all the Churches in *England*, before the Presbyters here set up their Claim against them, and ordained in Opposition to them, were the true and sole Pastors of the Church: When therefore the *Presbyters* set themselves up for Guides, and

(a) Rom. xvi. 17.

ordained in direct Opposition to these Bishops and their Clergy, they then (allowing that they had a Power to Ordain) involved themselves, *and all those that joined with them*, in the Sin of Schism ; even as the *Donatists* and *Novatians* of old, for that they separated themselves without a Cause, upon Pretence of purer Ordinances, and better Edification, were esteemed Schismaticks from the Catholick Church, even tho' they had those that were *Episcopally*, and confessed therefore to be *Validly Ordained*. And much more would they have been so esteemed, had they only had Presbyters at the Head of them, who had pretended to *the Power of Laying on of Hands* to Ordain, without, yea, in Opposition to *Bishops*.

I do but hint these Observations, and leave them to thy serious Consideration, without saying any thing farther upon them ; nor, indeed, should I have said so much, had not Justice to my Subject necessarily required it, since it would be vain to convince thee of the Necessity of consulting a *Spiritual Guide*, if after all thou art at a loss, *Who he is*, and amongst the many *false Teachers that are gone out into the World*, knewest not *Where to find him*.

It appears then, that the Curate of thy Parish, (who derives his Authority, by an uninterrupted Succession, from the Hands of the Apostles) wherein thou livest, is regularly

larly thy proper *Spiritual Guide*; it is to him that the Charge of thy Soul is committed of God, and to him therefore thou must commit the Care of it: Nor canst thou, with so great Reason, expect the Blessing of God, *if thou heapest to thyself another Teacher*, and preferrest one of thine own choosing, to him, whom the Divine Providence hath set over thee; thou art then guilty of the Sin which the Apostle blames the *Corinthians* for, (a) *The Glorifying in Men*; yea, even tho' thou thinkest that whilst he teacheth another, yet he teacheth not himself, yet art not thou at Liberty to separate thyself from him, but still to hearken to, and to observe him, if thou wilt submit to thy Blessed Saviour's Determination; *The Scribes and Pharisees sit in Moses's Seat*, all therefore that they bid you observe, that observe and do; but do not after their Works, for they say and do not (b). Tho' therefore they that sit in Christ's Seat, say and do not, so that their Works are not to be imitated; yet whatsoever they bid Christians, agreeable to the Gospel of Christ, that are they to observe and do: And this, I think, is to be understood as a strict Prohibition of private Christians forsaking the Assembling themselves together with him, who has the Rule over them, even tho' he be an Unworthy Minister: They are still obliged to attend to the Publick Exercise of his Mi-

(a) 1 Cor. iii. 4, 21.

(b) Matth. xxiii. 2, 3.

nistry, and not to make Divisions from him upon Account of his Unworthiness.

But then with respect to consulting him privately, they are, I think, more at Liberty, if they are so unhappy as to live in a Parish, in which the Minister is either notoriously Wicked, or grossly Ignorant; one that is either not able, or not willing and ready, to give good Advice in private to any of his Flock: In such a Case, tho' they should not publicly divide from him, yet may they, nay, they must seek out for a more *Faithful Guide*, and some worthy neighbouring Minister, or any other with whom they are well acquainted, is to be applied to for private Counsel and Instructions: This is a Liberty which the Governors of the Church not only permitt, but require them to make use of, in the Exhortation to the Holy Communion: *If there be any of you, that requireth farther Advice or Counsel, let him come to me, or to some other Discreet and Learned Minister of God's Word, and open his Grief, that by the Ministry of God's Holy Word, he may receive the Benefit of Absolution; together with Ghostly Advice and Counsel, to the quieting of his Conscience, and avoiding of all Scruple and Doubtfulness.*

Having now shewn thee the Great Advantage and Usefulness of consulting a *Spiritual Guide*; answered the Objections that may be made against the doing this; and also directed

bee in the Choice of him; I would, in the
 last place, offer thee some Directions that may
 be of Use to thee in the Practice of this neg-
 lected, but useful Expedient of Holy Living;

And this I cannot do better, than in the
 Words of the pious Author of the abovemention-
 ed excellent Book, which therefore take,
 with some little Addition and Substraction.



C H A P. IV.

Directions how to apply to him.

“ I.



BEING resolved as to the
 “ Person thou designest for
 “ thy Guide, I advise thee to
 “ go to him, and having in-
 “ formed him of thy Desire
 “ to save thy Soul, and to put thyself under
 “ his Conduct in order to it; beseech him to
 “ receive thee into his Care, and to give thee
 “ such Directions as he shall think necessary
 “ and fitting for thee; assuring him, that
 “ thou wilt follow them to the utmost of thy
 “ Power; and endeavour to shew thyself a
 “ good Christian in submitting thyself to
 “ him, as to Christ’s Minister, and by de-
 “ pending altogether upon him. And that
 “ he

“ he may the better judge of the Honeſty and
 “ Sincerity of thy Heart, in what thou telleſt
 “ him, and know what Directions thou haſt
 “ moſt need of; be not aſhamed to make thy
 “ ſelf fully known to him; tell him what
 “ Manner of Education thou haſt had, what
 “ Manner of Life thou haſt led, what Con-
 “ victionſ thou haſt had at any Time of thy
 “ Evil of Sin, what Reſolutions thou haſt
 “ taken upon thoſe Convictionſ, how far
 “ thou haſt made them good, and where
 “ thou haſt failed; acquaint him with thy
 “ natural Temper, and thy acquired Inclina-
 “ tions; tell him what evil Habits thou haſt
 “ contracted, what vicious Cuſtoms thou haſt
 “ been, or art engaged in; what Temptations
 “ thou haſt found thyſelf moſt obnoxious
 “ to, and overcome by, &c. In a word
 “ I adviſe thee to open thy very Soul unto
 “ him, (he will help thee to do it by ſeaſon-
 “ able and fitting Queſtions, if he find thee
 “ willing) and conceal not the leaſt Thing
 “ from him. Having thus acquainted thy
 “ *Spiritual Guide* with thy Deſires, and ha-
 “ ving fully opened thyſelf unto him, ſet thy-
 “ ſelf to receive his Inſtructions; hear him
 “ as thou wouldſt hear Chriſt himſelf, who
 “ Miniſter he is, ſpeaking to thee”: Not
 “ that thou art to yield an implicit Faith to
 “ every Thing that he ſhall ſay, or blindly
 “ follow his Counſel and Directions, for he has
 “ *no Dominion over thy Faith, nor Authority*

impose any Thing upon thee contrary to the
 plain Dictates of thy Conscience ; and thou
*art required to prove all Things, before thou hold-
 est fast that which is good :* Yet so much Regard
 is due to him, that thou art obliged to fol-
 low his Advice, if it do not appear to con-
 tradict thy Reason, and the Faith of Christ.
 So much Regard thou payest to the Voice of a
Stranger, when thou consultest him concern-
 ing the Way thou art to go in, except thou
 certainly knowest that he directs thee falsely,
 thou followest his Directions ; even tho' they
 may not be so agreeable to thy own Notions
 and Opinion : And shall not the same Defe-
 rence be paid to those that be authorized by
 Christ himself *to be Guides of the Blind,* and
 whom he hath commanded thee *to observe,*
and to do whatsoever they shall bid thee, if it
 be agreeable, and not contrary to his written
 Word ? submit to him therefore, tho' not
 blindly ; “ Mark what he says, with the
 greatest Care ; if any thing fall from him,
 which thou dost not fully understand, de-
 sire him to explain his Meaning ; if thou
 dost distrust thy Memory, his Instructions
 being many, desire him to repeat them ” :
 And when he hath made an End, give him,
 together with thy Thanks, thy Promise to
 follow his Directions ; and so begging his
 Prayers, and his Blessing, in the Name of
 Christ, take thy Leave of him.

“ As

" As soon as thou art gone from him, be-
 " gin to recollect the good Advices thou hast
 " received, and to practice accordingly ; and
 " omitt not the doing of any thing he hath
 " advised thee to. If any thing he hath ad-
 " vised thee to seem hard, or without Rea-
 " son, yet reject it not ; but consider, that
 " tho' thou dost not perceive the Reason why
 " he hath laid such Things upon thee, yet he
 " may have seen good Reason for it : Thou
 " dost not know but it was to try the Sincere-
 " rity of thy Profession thou hast made to
 " him, and to know the better how to fit
 " himself to thy Necessities hereafter ; or,
 " it may be, he might (in Prudence) design
 " that thou shouldst not understand the Rea-
 " son of some particular Advices, till thou
 " feelest the good Effect of them, and the
 " great Advantages they bring thee, to dis-
 " pose thee the more readily and chearfully to
 " follow him for the future ; for finding great
 " Benefit in that, in which thou couldst fore-
 " see none ; as well as in that which did
 " promise thee much, as thou canst not but
 " think thyself happy in meeting with such a
 " Guide, in respect to that which is past, so
 " thou canst not but be mightily encouraged
 " by it, to give him the entire Disposal of
 " thee for the future. Be careful then to ob-
 " serve his Directions in every Thing ; re-
 " membring, That as a sick Person can re-
 " ceive no Benefit by the best Physician in the

" World, how well soever he has made him
 " to understand his Disease, if he puts up his
 " Prescription in his Pocket, and makes no
 " farther Use of them; so the Advices of thy
 " Guide (how good soever they may be in
 " themselves) will be of no Advantage to
 " thee, if thou dost not follow them: Nay,
 " let me add, (which thou art concerned to
 " remember) that thy Case will be much
 " worse, than the Case of such an imprudent
 " Person; for tho' he is not like to be bene-
 " fited by the Prescription of his Physician,
 " yet can he receive no Hurt by his not using
 " them; whereas thou wilt receive much Da-
 " mage by neglecting those that have been
 " given thee; for besides this, that all in-
 " sincere Dealing in Matters of Religion, and
 " Trifling in Holy Things, if I may so speak,
 " does in itself tend to harden the Heart, and
 " to make thee more regardless of the great
 " Concerns of thy Soul; it will certainly pro-
 " voke God to withdraw his Grace from
 " thee, and to leave thee to fall into that
 " Ruin and Destruction, which thou art but
 " little afraid of, and takest no Care to avoid.
 " Return to thy Guide after some Time,
 " (especially before thou receivest the Holy
 " Sacrament, which is agreeable to the Order
 " of the (a) Church) and give him an impar-
 " tial Account of the Use thou hast made of

(a) Vid. *First Rubrick in Communion-Office.*

“ his Instructions, and the Benefit thou hast
 “ received by them; if thou hast failed in any
 “ thing, confess it freely, and declare thy
 “ Resolution to do better for the Time to
 “ come; if thou canst say, that thou hast
 “ failed in Nothing, give God Thanks, and
 “ say as the young Man did to our Blessed Sa-
 “ viour, *What lack I yet (a)?* And then re-
 “ ceive his Directions, as thou didst before,
 “ and take Care to practise accordingly”.

If thou hast any Objections thrown in thy
 Way against; if any Doubts or Scruples arise
 in thy Mind concerning holding Communion
 with the Establish'd Church; if any one ei-
 ther of the *Popish* or *Dissenting* Party, by *cun-
 ning Craftiness* lie in wait to deceive thee, pre-
 sently apply thyself to thy *Spiritual Guide*, and
 propose to him their Objections, or those
 Doubts and Scruples which thou thyself canst
 not fully answer. It is his Duty to assist thee,
 and thine to desire his Assistance, in all Things
 of Moment that concern thy Soul. And no-
 thing is of greater Moment and Concern than
 the Leaving the Communion of the Establish'd
 Church; which therefore thou shouldst not
 leave, before thou hast communicated the Rea-
 sons of it, to him whom God hath given thee
 to keep thee in the *Unity of the Faith*, and from
 being tossed about with every *Wind of Doctrine*.
 And if thou art so unhappy as to have been

(a) *Matth. xix. 20.*

brought up in *Separation*, being come to Years of Discretion, thou shouldst impartially enquire into the Grounds and Reasons of it; and not take thy Religion upon Trust, or go on in a Way of Error, because thou first set out in it; but make use of all proper Methods of Information, particularly this of consulting a Learned and Discreet Minister of the Establish'd Church. For it is required of thee, *That thou be able to give an Account of the Reason of the Faith that is in thee, with Meekness and Fear*; and how canst thou do this, if thou dost not take Pains to be rightly informed in the Principles of it? *That thou prove all Things, before thou holdest fast even that which is good*; much less therefore shouldst thou *hold fast* that which is Evil, without enquiring and proving whether it be so, or no: To do this, is plainly contrary to the Word of God, which thou acknowledgest to be the Rule of thy Faith and Practice; to the Justice and Charity which thou owest to thy own Soul; and to that Sincerity which thou professest; for Sincerity will not permitt thee wilfully to neglect any proper Method of coming to the Knowledge of the Truth: And nothing less than Sincerity can plead thy Excuse in a wrong Method of Religion, or even justify thee in a right one. But to proceed:

“ Keep a constant Correspondence with
 “ him, as long as thou livest; acquainting
 “ him, from time to time, with the State and
 “ Condition

“ Condition of thy Soul, with thy Progress in
 “ Wisdom and Vertue, with thy Tempta-
 “ tions and Discouragements, with thy Fail-
 “ ings and Imperfections, with thy Doubts
 “ and Fears, with thy Joys and Sorrows; and
 “ undertake not any Thing of Moment or Im-
 “ portance, without his Advice and Approba-
 “ tion: Thou wilt quickly be sensible of such
 “ Advantages by this Course, as will effectually
 “ encourage thee to proceed in it. I will
 “ not insist upon that Peace and Satisfaction
 “ which thou wilt constantly enjoy in thy
 “ own Mind by it, as having not only the
 “ Approbation of thy own Conscience in e-
 “ very Thing thou dost, but also the Appro-
 “ bation of one of Christ’s Ministers, who is
 “ better able to judge of thy Actions, and
 “ may be presumed to judge more impartially
 “ than thyself wouldst do. It may suffice to
 “ mention some of those Services he will be
 “ continually doing thee; he will instruct thee
 “ in what thou art ignorant of, and will ei-
 “ ther prevent or rectify thy Mistakes: He
 “ will resolve thy Doubts, and remove thy
 “ Fears, and ease thee of thy Sorrows: He
 “ will restrain thee when thou art too zealous
 “ and forward; and quicken thee when thou
 “ art dull and slothful, and refresh and cheer
 “ thee when thou art weary: He will re-
 “ store thee when thou art fallen, and apply
 “ the Promises of the Gospel to thee, and help
 “ thee to take Comfort in them: He will re-
 “ move

“ move many Difficulties out of thy Way, and
 “ arm thee against Temptations, and support
 “ thee under Tryals, and be both a Guide
 “ and a Guardian to thee, in all the dangerous and troublesome Passages of thy Life.
 “ In a word, he will make thee to understand
 “ thy Duty fully, to know what is necessary,
 “ and what is lawful, and what is expedient,
 “ and what is seasonable; and help thee to
 “ distinguish between Truth and Falshood,
 “ Reality and Appearance, Good and Evil:
 “ He will excite and stir up thy Will to embrace the one, and refuse the other: He
 “ will moderate thy Affections, and keep thy
 “ Passions in Order, and preserve thee in an
 “ even steady Course of Well-doing, and at
 “ last deliver thee up in Peace and Safety into
 “ the Hands of the Great Shepherd and
 “ Bishop of our Souls, Jesus Christ.

“ To these Directions I might add many
 “ more, viz. That thou wilt do well to endeavour thyself to thy Guide as much as thou
 “ canst, that he may take the greater Care of
 “ thee, and be more ardently desirous of thy
 “ Salvation; to which Purpose, thou mayst
 “ do well to shew thy Esteem of him by a
 “ respectful Carriage before others. There
 “ was a great and good Man (a) once in the
 “ World, that would never take Place of a
 “ Priest before the People, the Dignity of the

(a) Monsieur de Reale.

" Office requiring, as he believed, and de-
 " serving the highest Respect : And if any one
 " say, that he was not of our Church ; I an-
 " swer, the greater Reason have most of us
 " to be ashamed of ourselves, who call our-
 " selves reformed, and do worse. . And far-
 " ther, thou mayst do well to contribute
 " chearfully, according to thy Ability, to-
 " wards his Maintenance, if he be not plen-
 " tifully provided for. The Primitive Chris-
 " tians were not backward to do this, as thou
 " mayst perceive by their devoting all that
 " they had, to the Service of Christ, and his
 " Church (a). And I wish I could not say,
 " that the Sacrilege of many that call them-
 " selves Christians in this Age, did not make
 " it in some sort necessary for some Christians
 " to do the same now.

" That thou must keep close to thy Guide
 " as long as thou livest, and never change
 " him, if God's Providence doth not con-
 " strain thee.

" That in all thy Intercourse with thy
 " Guide, thou must look beyond him, viz.
 " to thy God, whose Minister he is, and who
 " guides and blesses thee by his Ministry, to
 " whom thou must daily address thyself by
 " Prayer, for a Blessing upon his Endea-
 " vours, and to whose Goodness and Mercy
 " thou must daily ascribe all the Benefit thou

(a) Acts iv. 34, 35.

"dost receive by them. But I must forbear,
 "having too far exceeded my Bounds already:
 "I conclude all with the Words of our
 "Dear Lord and Saviour, Now thou knowest
 "these Things, happy art thou if thou dost
 "them (a).

(a) Job. xiii. 17.



A PRAYER for all Bishops and Priests.



Almighty God, who by thy Son Jesus Christ, didst give to thy Apostle S. Peter many excellent Gifts, and commandedst him earnestly to feed thy Flock; make, I beseech thee, all Bishops and Pastors diligently to preach thy Holy Word, and the People obediently to follow the same, that they may receive the Crown of everlasting Glory, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.





A PRAYER, by Mr. Nelson, for the
Clergy, that they may rightly discharge
their Holy Functions.

RANT, O Lord, that all those who
dedicate themselves to the Service of
thy Altar, may be inwardly moved by
thy Holy Spirit to take upon them that
Sacred Ministration; that their Consciences may
testify to them, that by engaging in this Holy
Calling, their chief Design is to serve thee, pro-
mote thy Glory, and edify thy People; that they
may neither be led by Ambition nor Covetousness;
that neither the Honours nor Revenues that are
annexed to this Profession, may have any Compe-
tition in their Minds, with a mighty Zeal for
thy Glory, and a Desire to promote the Salvation
of Souls. To this End, O Lord, grant that they
may make thy Holy Writ the chief Subject of all
their Studies; that they may from thence instruct
thy People committed to their Charge, and silence
Gain-sayers; that they may faithfully and dili-
gently administer thy Holy Sacraments; that they
may labour in Season, and out of Season, by pri-
vate and publick Admonitions and Exhortations;
that they may maintain Peace and Love among
all Christians, and frame themselves, and their
Families, according to the Precepts of thy Holy
Gospel. Give them the Will, O Lord, to do
G their

their Duty, and Strength, and Power faithfully to perform the same, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.



Another PRAYER for the Clergy.

GRANT, O Lord, that all those who administer in Holy Things, may have a great Sense of the Dignity and Importance of their Office; that since they are thy Ambassadors, they may, in all their Actions, have a due Regard to the Excellency of their Character, and faithfully, diligently, and prudently transact those great Affairs thou hast entrusted to their Management. That since they are thy Ministers, they may have always imprinted in their Remembrance, how great a Treasure is committed to their Charge, the Sheep of Christ, which he bought with his Death, and for whom he shed his Blood; that the Church and Congregation whom they serve, is the Spouse and Body of Christ. That since they are the Stewards of thy Mysteries, they may feed and provide for thy Family; seek thy Sheep that are dispersed Abroad, and thy Children which are in the midst of this naughty World; that they may be saved thro' Christ. That since they are Labourers in thy Vineyard, they may never cease, by their Care and Diligence, to bring all such as are committed

to their Charge unto that Agreement in Faith and Knowledge of God, and to that Ripeness and Perfection of Age in Christ, that there may be no Place left for Error in Religion, or for Viciousness of Life. That since their Employment is laborious and difficult, they may constantly pray for the Heavenly Assistance of the Holy Ghost, from thee, O Father, by the Mediation of our Blessed Redeemer and Saviour Jesus Christ; that by daily Reading and Weighing of the Scriptures, they may wax riper and stronger in their Ministry, and so fashion their Lives, and those of their Families, after the Rules and Doctrine of Christ, that they may be wholesom and godly Examples for the rest of the Congregation to follow, and be able to give a good Account of their Stewardship at the Tribunal of Christ: To whom with Thee, and the Holy Ghost, be all Honour and Glory, World without End. Amen.



A PRAYER for the Discharge of our Duty towards the Clergy.



Thankfully acknowledge, O God, thy great Goodness, who hast set apart an Order of Men, on purpose to guide and govern us, to direct and assist us in Matters of the greatest Importance, even our Eternal Salvation. Grant, O Lord, I may always reverence and respect them, because they have a peculiar

peculiar Relation to thee ; that I may sincerely love them, because of those great Benefits I receive by their Administrations ; that I may readily and chearfully provide for their Maintenance, because the Lord hath ordained, That they which preach the Gospel, should live of the Gospel (a) ; and That he who is taught in the Word, out to communicate to him that teacheth in all good Things (b) ; that I may never rob them of their just Right, by the least sacrilegious Encroachment ; that the Fear of Ananias's and Sapphira's Punishment may continually possess my Heart, as it did the Church at first, and as many as heard it ; that I may earnestly pray for them, because thy Divine Assistance is so necessary to crown their Labours with Success : For tho' Paul planteth, and Apollos watereth, 'tis thou, O Lord, that givest the Increase (c). And above all, make me careful to obey them that have the Rule over me, because they watch for my Soul, as they that must give an Account ; that they may do it with Joy, and not with Grief (d) ; that so by a faithful Discharge of my Duty to my Spiritual Superiors, I may continue a sound Member of thy Church here on Earth, and may pass Eternity in the Society of the Church Triumphant in Heaven, singing Praises and Hallelujahs to the Blessed and Glorious Trinity, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Amen.

(a) 1 Cor. ix. 14.
iii. 6.

(b) Gal. vi. 6.

(c) 1 Cor.

(d) Hebr. xiii. 17.

F I N I S.

